

SB 22/2012

15 March 2012

Achievement and Entitlement to Free School Meals in Wales, 2011

This annual Statistical Bulletin provides information on the relationship between achievement and entitlement to free school meals in two ways:

Section 1 analyses the performance of pupils eligible for free school meals and their non-eligible counterparts at Key Stages 1 to 4, making use of pupil level data attainment data matched to pupil characteristics information from the annual school census. The tables show data for 2007 to 2011, the charts show a longer time series. Data for 2011 are new, the remaining data in this section have previously been published.

The [Child Poverty Strategy for Wales](#), issued in February 2011, uses the percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals who achieve the Level 2 threshold including English/Welsh and mathematics at Key Stage 4 as one of the six key performance indicators to measure progress against the objectives of this strategy. This data can be found in Table 4 and Chart 4 of this bulletin.

Key Results for section 1

- The performance of pupils eligible for free school meals is lower than their non eligible counterparts at all key stages and in all performance measures;
- Looking at the core subject indicator (see definitions), the gap in performance has narrowed over the last six years at Key Stages 1, 2 and 3. However at Key Stage 4, the gap in performance in the Level 2 threshold including a GCSE A*-C in English/Welsh and maths has widened;
- The gap in performance increases as pupils get older.

Section 2 examines the statistical relationship in **secondary schools** between free school meal entitlement and performance for a school and local authority level. It shows the strength of the relationship and how the data can be used to “benchmark” performance. This information will be useful to researchers those who want to examine the reasons behind varying performance, and to schools and local authorities when benchmarking performance and setting targets. This section is based on new data for 2011. The relationship is too weak in primary schools to repeat the analysis.

Free school meal entitlement has often been taken as a measure of the socio-economic conditions of a school’s population. It should be noted however that whilst there is a link between FSM entitlement and performance, many other factors affect school assessment and examination results. Some schools in disadvantaged areas perform well whilst others in more advantaged areas perform poorly.

Statistician: Stephen Hughes

Tel: 029 2082 5514

E-mail: school.stats@wales.gsi.gov.uk

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Cyhoeddwyd gan Y Gwasanaethau Gwybodaeth a Dadansoddi

Llywodraeth Cymru, Parc Cathays, Caerdydd, CF10 3NQ

Ffôn – Swyddfa’r Wasg **029 2089 8099**, Ymholiadau Cyhoeddus **029 2082 3332**

www.cymru.gov.uk/ystadegau

Issued by Knowledge and Analytical Services

Welsh Government, Cathays Park, Cardiff, CF10 3NQ

Telephone – Press Office **029 2089 8099**, Public Enquiries **029 2082 5050**

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Key Results for section 2

- The statistical models fitted are similar for each year analysed, implying that the strength of the relationship is constant over time;
- For each of the performance indicators selected, there is a strong link between achievement and the level of entitlement to free school meals: as the level of FSM entitlement increases, the level of achievement decreases (Charts A, B and C).

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Section 1: Achievements by free school meal entitlement

Key Points:

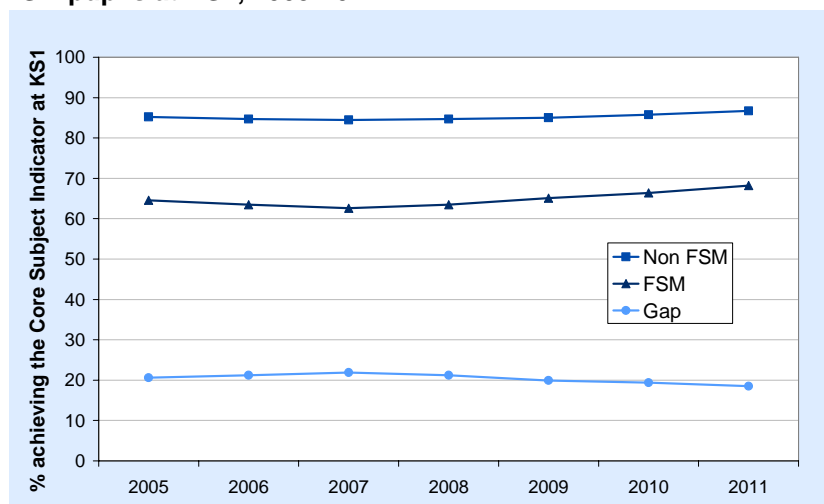
Unless stated otherwise, all comments relate to the attainment of the Core Subject Indicator (CSI).

The CSI represents the percentage of pupils achieving the expected level or above in English or Welsh (First Language), Mathematics and Science in combination.

Further data for individual subjects and attainment levels can be found in Tables 1 to 4.

Key Stage 1 (Chart 1 and Table 1)

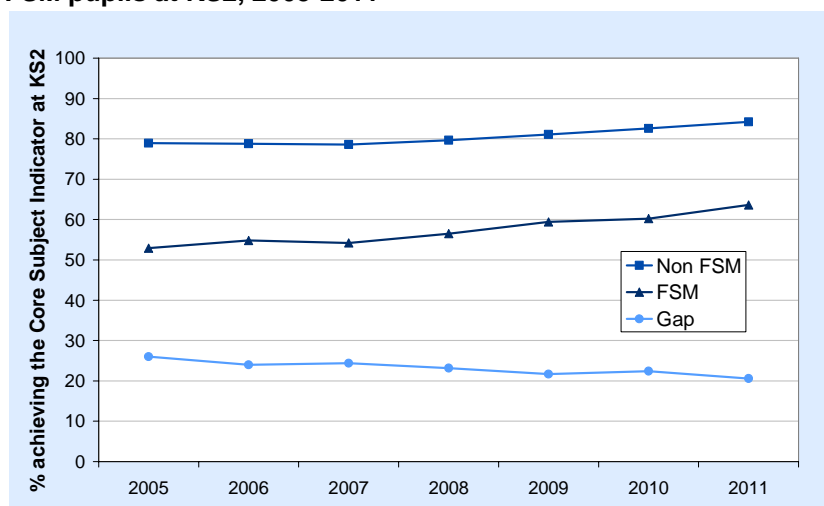
Chart 1: Difference between CSI performance of FSM and non-FSM pupils at KS1, 2005-2011



- the performance of FSM pupils has improved since 2005. The performance of non-FSM pupils remained stable 2005 and 2009, before rising in 2011;
- the gap in performance rose between 2005 and 2007 before falling over the last four years;
- the gap is widest in English (17 to 21 percentage points) and narrowest in Science (12 to 14 percentage points).

Key Stage 2 (Chart 2 and Table 2)

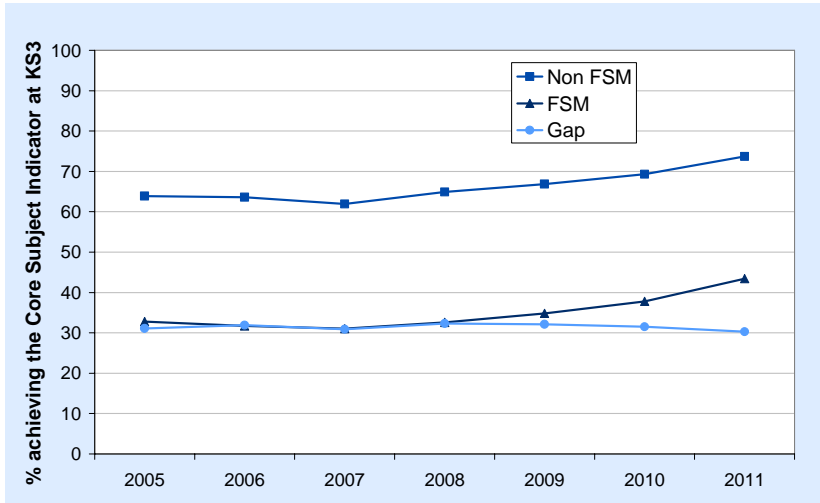
Chart 2: Difference between CSI performance of FSM and non-FSM pupils at KS2, 2005-2011



- the performance of both FSM and non-FSM pupils has improved since 2005;
- the gap in performance has been falling steadily over the last few years, despite a slight rise in 2010;
- the gap is widest in English (19 to 24 percentage points) and narrowest in Science (15 to 18 percentage points);
- the gap is wider than at KS1.

Key Stage 3 (Chart 3 and [Table 3](#))

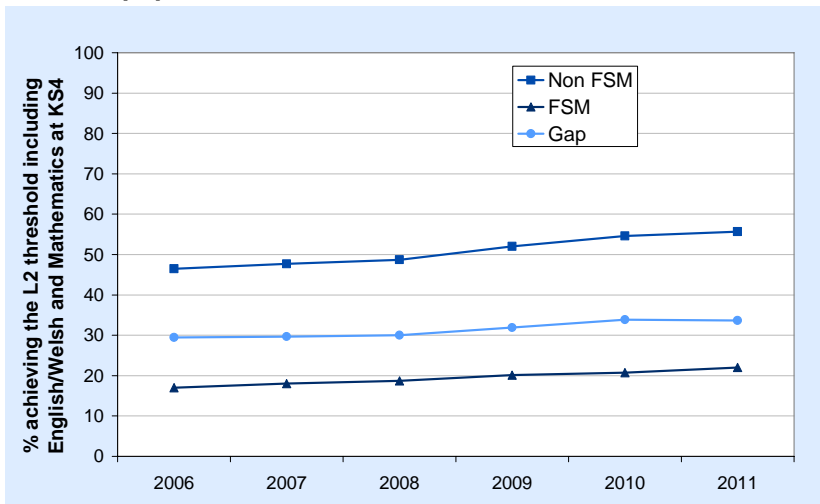
Chart 3: Difference between CSI performance of FSM and non-FSM pupils at KS3, 2005-2011



- the performance of both FSM and non-FSM has improved since 2005;
- the gap in performance remained stable between 2005 and 2009, before falling over the last couple of years;
- the gap is widest in English (26 to 29 percentage points) and narrowest in Maths (24 to 28 percentage points);
- the gap is wider than at KS1 or KS2.

Key Stage 4 (Chart 4 and [Table 4](#))

Chart 4: Difference between performance in the Level 2 threshold including a GCSE A*-C in English / Welsh and Maths of FSM and non-FSM pupils at KS4, 2006-2011



- the performance of both FSM and non-FSM has improved every year since 2006;
- the gap in performance increased every year between 2006 and 2010 but has remained stable in 2011 at 34 percentage points;
- the gap is now widest for the Core Subject Indicator (33 percentage points) although historically it has been wider at the L2 threshold (33 to 34 percentage points). The gap is narrowest at the L1 threshold (15 to 21 percentage points);
- the gap is generally wider than at all previous key stages.

Table 1: Key Stage 1 by free school meal entitlement, 2007-2011

Percentage of pupils achieving at least the expected level (Level 2) in teacher assessments

Year	Free school meal entitlement	English (a)		Welsh First Language (a)		Maths, Science and CSI	Maths	Science	CSI
		Cohort	%	Cohort	%	Cohort	%	%	%
2007	Eligible for FSM	5,090	65.6	839	76.0	5,929	75.2	78.5	62.6
	Not eligible for FSM	19,868	86.8	5,560	90.5	25,428	89.9	92.1	84.5
	All pupils	24,958	82.4	6,399	88.6	31,357	87.1	89.6	80.3
2008	Eligible for FSM	4,840	66.5	784	74.4	5,624	74.9	79.1	63.5
	Not eligible for FSM	19,520	86.7	5,720	90.7	25,240	89.7	92.3	84.7
	All pupils	24,360	82.7	6,504	88.7	30,864	87.0	89.9	80.9
2009	Eligible for FSM	4,952	68.6	793	76.5	5,745	75.1	80.4	65.1
	Not eligible for FSM	18,852	86.7	5,556	92.1	24,408	89.9	92.4	85.0
	All pupils	23,804	83.0	6,349	90.2	30,153	87.1	90.1	81.2
2010	Eligible for FSM	5,204	69.0	906	78.7	6,110	75.9	81.1	66.4
	Not eligible for FSM	18,064	87.2	5,635	92.2	23,699	90.6	92.9	85.8
	All pupils	23,268	83.1	6,541	90.3	29,809	87.6	90.5	81.8
2011	Eligible for FSM	5,426	71.4	925	79.8	6,351	77.3	80.8	68.2
	Not eligible for FSM	18,379	88.0	5,789	92.9	24,168	90.9	93.0	86.7
	All pupils	23,805	84.2	6,714	91.1	30,519	88.0	90.5	82.8

(a) The cohort entering English and Welsh First Language is different to the cohort for Maths, Science and CSI. At Key Stage 1, pupils are required to be assessed in either English or Welsh First Language.

Table 2: Key Stage 2 by free school meal entitlement, 2007-2011

Percentage of pupils achieving at least the expected level (Level 4) in teacher assessments

Year	Free school meal entitlement	Cohort	English	Maths	Science	CSI	Welsh First Language	
			%	%	%	%	Cohort	%
2007	Eligible for FSM	6,264	60.4	64.1	70.1	54.2	908	47.9
	Not eligible for FSM	28,446	82.7	84.0	88.2	78.6	5,886	76.8
	All pupils	34,710	78.7	80.4	85.0	74.2	6,794	72.9
2008	Eligible for FSM	6,316	62.4	65.7	71.6	56.5	896	54.8
	Not eligible for FSM	29,614	83.7	84.8	88.8	79.7	6,238	80.3
	All pupils	35,930	80.0	81.5	85.8	75.6	7,134	77.1
2009	Eligible for FSM	6,258	64.7	68.3	73.9	59.4	745	60.0
	Not eligible for FSM	28,282	84.7	85.7	89.3	81.1	5,877	82.5
	All pupils	34,540	81.1	82.6	86.5	77.1	6,622	80.0
2010	Eligible for FSM	6,413	65.7	67.8	72.3	60.2	795	64.4
	Not eligible for FSM	27,036	86.0	87.1	89.9	82.6	5,747	83.5
	All pupils	33,449	82.1	83.4	86.6	78.3	6,542	81.2
2011	Eligible for FSM	6,485	68.5	71.0	73.8	63.6	845	66.5
	Not eligible for FSM	25,903	87.2	88.5	90.6	84.2	5,504	84.5
	All pupils	32,388	83.5	85.0	87.2	80.1	6,349	82.1

Table 3: Key Stage 3 by free school meal entitlement, 2007-2011

Percentage of pupils achieving at least the expected level (Level 5) in teacher assessments

Year	Free school meal entitlement	Cohort	English	Maths	Science	CSI	Welsh First Language	
			%	%	%	%	Cohort	%
2007	Eligible for FSM	5,920	44.1	47.1	47.2	31.0	528	49.1
	Not eligible for FSM	30,663	73.5	74.5	75.2	61.9	5,084	75.2
	All pupils	36,583	68.8	70.1	70.7	56.9	5,612	72.8
2008	Eligible for FSM	5,707	45.0	48.9	50.2	32.6	545	45.7
	Not eligible for FSM	30,334	74.4	77.1	78.4	64.9	5,250	75.1
	All pupils	36,041	69.7	72.6	73.9	59.8	5,795	72.3
2009	Eligible for FSM	5,853	46.7	51.3	53.4	34.8	531	48.4
	Not eligible for FSM	29,170	75.7	78.1	80.3	66.9	5,060	77.9
	All pupils	35,023	70.8	73.6	75.8	61.5	5,591	75.1
2010	Eligible for FSM	5,892	49.8	54.1	55.9	37.8	544	50.2
	Not eligible for FSM	28,527	77.4	80.1	81.7	69.3	5,002	79.7
	All pupils	34,419	72.7	75.6	77.3	63.9	5,546	76.8
2011	Eligible for FSM	6,561	55.1	58.2	60.4	43.4	603	59.5
	Not eligible for FSM	29,163	80.8	82.4	85.0	73.7	5,255	83.9
	All pupils	35,724	76.1	78.0	80.4	68.1	5,858	81.4

Table 4: Key Stage 4 by free school meal entitlement, 2007-2011^(a)

Percentage of pupils aged 15 at the start of the academic year

Year	Free school meal entitlement	Cohort	Percentage of pupils achieving:				Average capped wider points score
			Level 1 threshold	Level 2 threshold	including English/ Welsh and Mathematics	CSI	
2007	Eligible for FSM	4,944	73.8	26.7	18.0	16.0	..
	Not eligible for FSM	31,854	92.0	60.4	47.7	44.8	..
	All pupils	36,798	89.5	55.9	43.7	40.9	..
2008	Eligible for FSM	4,831	72.1	28.0	18.7	18.9	..
	Not eligible for FSM	31,908	91.6	61.9	48.7	49.2	..
	All pupils	36,739	89.0	57.4	44.8	45.2	..
2009	Eligible for FSM	4,969	75.7	32.5	20.1	19.5	..
	Not eligible for FSM	30,739	92.8	66.3	52.0	50.8	..
	All pupils	35,708	90.5	61.6	47.6	46.4	..
2010	Eligible for FSM	5,148 r	78.3	35.3	20.7	19.8	237.5
	Not eligible for FSM	30,106 r	93.9 r	69.6 r	54.6 r	53.2 r	321.9
	All pupils	35,254 r	91.7	64.6 r	49.7	48.4	309.6
2011	Eligible for FSM	5,366	79.8	40.9	22.0	21.1	247.8
	Not eligible for FSM	28,979	94.7	73.5	55.7	54.2	329.6
	All pupils	34,345	92.4	68.4	50.5	49.0	316.8

(a) Up to 2008, includes GCSEs, GNVQs and NVQs. From 2009, includes all qualifications approved for pre-16 use in Wales. See Key Quality information.

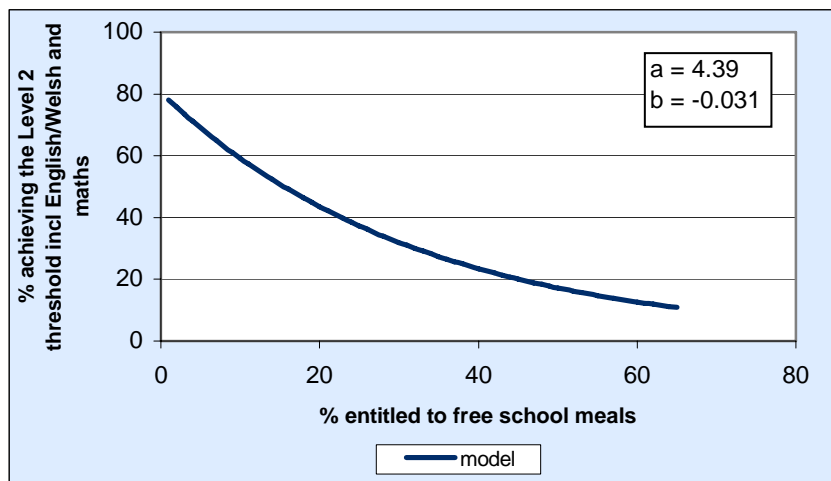
Section 2: The statistical relationship in secondary schools between free school meal entitlement and performance

The correlation coefficient R is a measure of the degree of linear association (correlation) between two variables. Where there is no correlation, R is close to 0. Where there is strong positive correlation, R is close to 1. Where there is strong negative correlation, R is close to -1. The closer the R² ratio is to 1, the better the fit of data to the model.

Similar analysis was conducted for Key Stages 1 and 2, which resulted in R² correlation coefficients of less than 0.2, therefore showing that free school meal entitlement has less effect on performance at these stages. The relationship is therefore not strong enough to warrant further analysis in this bulletin.

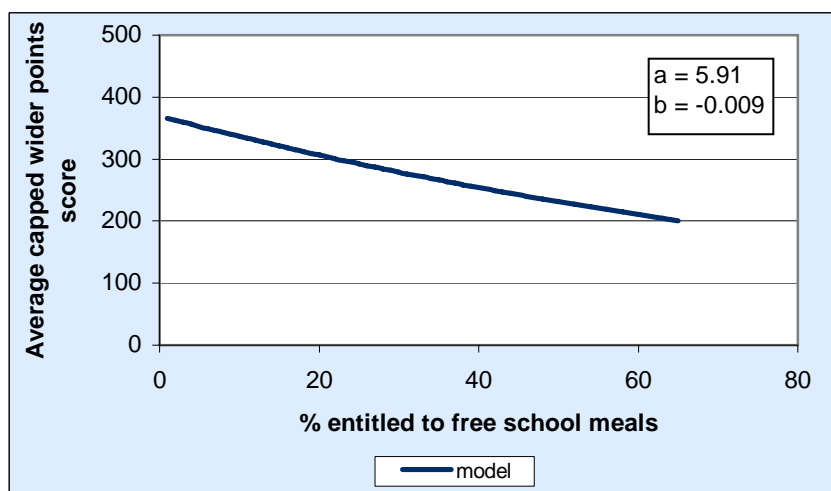
Key points:

Chart 5: Achievement of the Level 2 threshold including English/Welsh and mathematics, by free school meal entitlement, 2011 (see Table 5 for coefficient values over time)



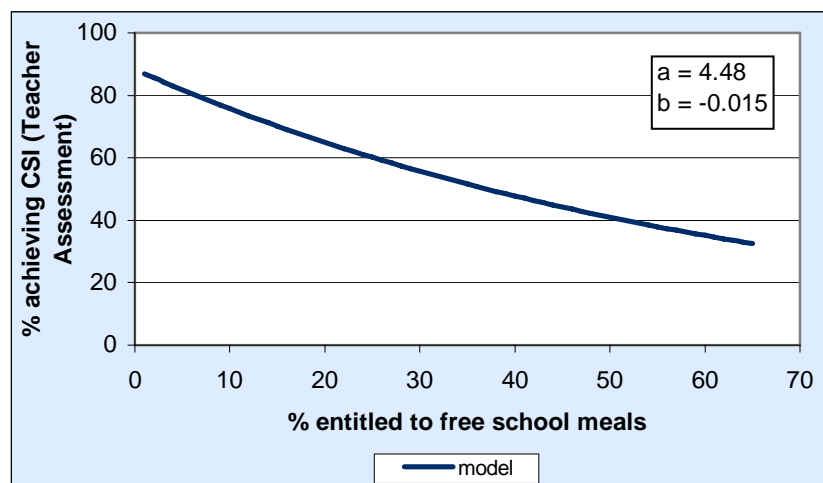
- Model: In (% achieving Level 2 incl. English/Welsh & maths) = $a + b \cdot \text{FSM}$
- R² correlation coefficient = 0.73, showing a strong positive relationship;
- The relationship is non-linear. At higher levels of FSM entitlement, reductions in entitlement have a relatively small effect on expected achievement. At lower levels of FSM entitlement, reductions in entitlement have a large effect on expected achievement.

Chart 6: Average capped wider points score by free school meal entitlement, 2011 (see Table 6 for coefficient values over time)



- Model: In (average capped points score) = $a + b \cdot \text{FSM}$
- R² correlation coefficient = 0.65, showing a strong positive relationship although not quite as strong as for the L2 threshold measure;
- Again, a non-linear relationship.

Chart 7: Percentage of pupils achieving the Core Subject Indicator at Key Stage 3, by free school meal entitlement, 2011
(see Table 7 for coefficient values over time)



- Model: $\ln(\% \text{ KS3 TA}) = a + b \cdot \text{FSM}$
- R^2 correlation coefficient = 0.67, showing a strong positive relationship;
- Again, a non-linear relationship.

Table 5: Co-efficients for model: Percentage of 15 year olds achieving the Level 2 threshold incl. English/Welsh and maths^(a) = $\exp(a + b \cdot \text{FSM})$

Year	a	b
2001	4.37	-0.028
2002	4.35	-0.027
2003	4.37	-0.030
2004	4.36	-0.027
2005	4.37	-0.028
2006	4.38	-0.026
2007	4.40	-0.027
2008	4.41	-0.024
2009	4.35	-0.035
2010	4.34	-0.030
2011	4.39	-0.031

(a) Up to 2007, relates to 5 GCSEs at A*-C or equivalent. For 2008, relates to the Level 2 threshold. From 2009, relates to the Level 2 threshold including a GCSE pass in English or Welsh first language and mathematics. Please refer to the Key Quality Information section.

Table 6: Co-efficients for model: Average capped wider points score^(a) = $\exp(a + b \cdot \text{FSM})$

Year	a	b
2001	3.96	-0.017
2002	3.96	-0.018
2003	3.97	-0.019
2004	3.98	-0.018
2005	3.98	-0.018
2006	4.00	-0.018
2007	4.02	-0.019
2008	6.10	-0.014
2009	6.17	-0.014
2010	6.19	-0.013
2011	5.91	-0.009

(a) Up to 2007, relates to average GCSE/GNVQ points score. From 2008 to 2010, relates to average wider points score. From 2011, relates to average capped wider points score. Please refer to the Key Quality Information section.

Table 7: Co-efficients for model: Percentage of pupils achieving the CSI (Teacher Assessments) = $\exp(a+b*FSM)$

Year	a	b
2003	4.33	-0.022
2004	4.36	-0.019
2005	4.37	-0.019
2006	4.40	-0.022
2007	4.42	-0.026
2008	4.39	-0.021
2009	4.42	-0.020
2010	4.43	-0.017
2011	4.48	-0.015

Table 8: Local Authority benchmarked data, 2011^(a)

	Percentage achieving CSI at Key Stage 3 (Teacher Assessment)	Expected "benchmark comparison" (b)	Percentage achieving the Level 2 threshold incl. English/Welsh and maths	Expected "benchmark comparison" (b)	Average capped wider points score	Expected "benchmark comparison" (b)
Isle of Anglesey	70	70	48	50	315	319
Gwynedd	77	74	55	57	334	332
Conwy	72	70	52	50	333	319
Denbighshire	67	71	54	52	325	322
Flintshire	74	75	60	59	322	334
Wrexham	70	68	48	48	319	315
Powys	78	77	60	62	341	340
Ceredigion	77	75	56	58	325	333
Pembrokeshire	72	71	51	52	312	323
Carmarthenshire	69	71	55	52	321	322
Swansea	69	67	54	47	317	309
Neath Port Talbot	65	66	52	45	328	308
Bridgend	69	68	47	48	311	314
The Vale of Glamorgan	73	73	58	55	339	328
Rhondda, Cynon, Taff	63	64	45	43	303	304
Merthyr Tydfil	52	61	40	39	295	295
Caerphilly	63	64	44	43	304	304
Blaenau Gwent	55	60	36	37	281	291
Torfaen	68	70	43	50	301	320
Monmouthshire	73	75	52	59	325	335
Newport	71	67	48	48	318	311
Cardiff	70	66	49	46	309	306

(a) Mainstream maintained schools only.

(b) LEA figures are based on school level model and school level calculations. Please refer to the Key Quality Information section.

Key Quality Information

Definitions

- **Free School Meal Entitlement** Children whose parents receive the following support payments are eligible to receive free school meals in maintained schools in Wales:
 - Income Support
 - Income Based Jobseekers Allowance
 - Support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
 - Income-related Employment and Support Allowance
 - Child Tax Credit, provided they are not entitled to Working Tax Credit and their annual income, as assessed by HM Revenue and Customs, does not exceed £16,190
 - Guarantee element of State Pension CreditFree schools meals are awarded where the parent or pupil meets the eligibility criteria and a request has been made by, or on behalf of the parent for free school meals. For further information please see the [Free School Meals FAQs](#) section on the Education and Skills web pages.
- **Core subject indicator** at KS1-3 is defined as achieving the expected level in both Maths and Science and either English or Welsh first language. At Key Stage 4 it is defined as achieving a level 2 qualification at grade A*-C in both Maths and Science and either English or Welsh first language.
- **Level thresholds** represent a volume, or 'size', of qualifications at a specific level on the National Qualifications Framework (NQF). Three thresholds have been established: Level 1 - a volume of qualifications at Level 1 equivalent to the volume of 5 GCSEs at grade D-G; Level 2 - a volume of qualifications at Level 2 equivalent to the volume of 5 GCSEs at grade A*-C.
- the **average capped wider points score** is calculated using the best 8 results and includes all approved qualifications. For information on all approved qualifications please see the Database of Approved Qualifications in Wales at www.dagw.org.uk. The calculation of the capped points score is explained in Annex A of the [Summary of Secondary School Performance: Notes for Guidance](#).

Coverage

- The statistics in this release cover all maintained and independent schools in Wales.
- The information in this release relates to all schools for Wales figures and to maintained secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units for LA figures.

Data quality

- The datasets used to produce Tables 1-4 have been produced by matching annual school census (PLASC) data from the January census to the attainment data obtained for examinations held in the following summer term. Matched data were available on the threshold equivalencies for the first time in 2009, therefore Table 4 refers to all qualifications approved for pre-16 use from that point. Data for previous years have been included where possible.
- The matching process is only possible for Local Authority maintained primary, secondary and special schools.
- Due to the movement of pupils between the school census date in January and the assessment period, and some issues with data matching, full coverage of free school meal eligibility and attainment data are not available for all pupils. Therefore the national figures in Tables 1-4 may not match those published in the National Curriculum Assessments and the Examination Results statistical releases (SDR 139/2011 and SDR 221/2011 respectively).

- The matching rates are shown below. In all but a small number of cases more than 99% of pupils in the attainment data have been successfully matched to the school census.

PLASC and attainment data:

		Number of pupils in:		% Coverage
		Matched data set from the NPD	Published cohort (a)	
Key Stage 1	2005	33,467	33,749	99.2
	2006	32,721	32,997	99.2
	2007	31,357	31,608	99.2
	2008	30,864	31,113	99.2
	2009	30,153	30,324	99.4
	2010	29,809	30,061	99.2
	2011	30,519	30,652	99.6
Key Stage 2	2005	35,883	35,937	99.8
	2006	35,092	35,337	99.3
	2007	34,710	34,881	99.5
	2008	35,930	36,099	99.5
	2009	34,540	34,683	99.6
	2010	33,449	33,674	99.3
	2011	32,388	32,498	99.7
Key Stage 3	2005	38,176	38,693	98.7
	2006	38,010	38,156	99.6
	2007	36,583	36,765	99.5
	2008	36,041	36,185	99.6
	2009	35,023	35,170	99.6
	2010	34,419	34,717	99.1
	2011	35,724	35,853	99.6
Key Stage 4	2005	37,371	37,372	100.0
	2006	36,365	37,813	96.2
	2007	36,798	38,302	96.1
	2008	36,739	37,792	97.2
	2009	35,708	36,434	98.0
	2010	35,254 r	35,875	98.3 r
	2011	34,345	34,830	98.6

(a) Excludes pupils in Independent schools and Pupil Referral Units (PRUs).

- At Key Stage 4, pupils from a non-English or Welsh background education were incorrectly excluded from the 2010 data. This has now been amended and has led to the following revisions to the Wales level data published on 16th March 2011:

Year	Free school meal entitlement	Cohort	Percentage of pupils achieving:				
			Level 1 threshold	Level 2 threshold	Level 2 including English/ Welsh and Mathematics	CSI	
2010	Eligible for FSM	Previous	5,146	78.3	35.3	20.7	19.8
		Revised	5,148	78.3	35.3	20.7	19.8
		Difference	2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Not eligible for FSM	Previous	30,083	94.0	69.7	54.7	53.3
		Revised	30,106	93.9	69.6	54.6	53.2
		Difference	23	-0.1	-0.1	-0.1	-0.1
	All pupils	Previous	35,229	91.7	64.7	49.7	48.4
		Revised	35,254	91.7	64.6	49.7	48.4
		Difference	25	0.0	-0.1	0.0	0.0

- Data for all other key stages are unaffected by this error.

Comparability

- Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 performance by free school meal entitlement in Wales can be compared with that in England. However Key Stage 4 performance by free school meal entitlement in Wales is not comparable with that in England. In Wales the data are based on pupils aged 15 at the start of the academic year, whereas in England they are based on pupils at the end of Key Stage 4. Developments are underway in Wales in moving towards producing indicators based on pupils at the end of Key Stage 4. Comparisons can not be made with Scotland due to the differences in qualification structure. For further information or advice on the constraints of international comparisons please e-mail school.stats@wales.gsi.gov.uk.

For reference, performance by free school meal entitlement at Key Stage 1, Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 4 in England can be found by following the links below:

Key Stage 1

[SFR22/2011 National Curriculum Assessments at Key Stage 1 in England, 2011](#)

Key Stage 2

[SFR31/2011 National Curriculum Assessments at Key Stage 2 in England 2010/2011 \(revised\)](#)

Key Stage 4

[SFR03/2012 GCSE and Equivalent Attainment by Pupil Characteristics in England, 2010/11](#)

- Up to 2007/08, the Key Stage 4 statistics include GCSEs, GCSE short course, GNVQs and NVQs only. From 2008/09, the statistics include all qualifications approved for pre-16 or 16-18 use in Wales. The introduction of the wider definition has meant the inclusion of a larger range of qualifications and thus an increase in the headline indicators of performance. The average capped wider points score has been included in this bulletin for the first time this year and has replaced the average wider points score.

Who are the key users of this data?

These statistics are used widely both within and outside the Welsh Assembly Government. Some of the key users are:

- Ministers and the Members Research Service in the National Assembly for Wales;
- The Department for Education in England;
- Other government departments;
- Local authorities;
- Schools;
- Estyn, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education and Training in Wales;
- Wales Audit Office;
- The Department for Children, Education and Lifelong Learning in the Welsh Assembly Government;
- Other areas of the Welsh Assembly Government;
- The research community;
- Students, academics and universities;
- Individual citizens and private companies.

What are the data used for?

These statistics are used in a variety of ways. Some examples of these are:

- Monitoring progress towards the objectives of the Child Poverty Strategy for Wales;
- advice to Ministers;
- resource allocation in the post-16 National Planning and Funding System;
- the all-Wales education core data packs (the replacement for the National Pupil Database);
- local authority and school comparisons and benchmarks;

- to inform the education policy decision-making process in Wales;
- to inform ESTYN during school inspections;
- contributes to the National Performance Indicators;
- international benchmarking;
- the education domain of the Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation;
- to assist in research in educational attainment.